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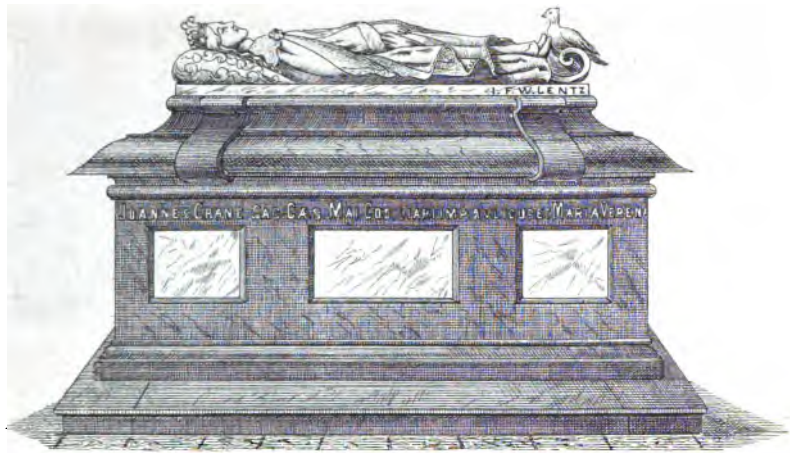

LE MONUMENT DE. S^te URSULE._ S.URSULA'S GRABMAL._ S.URSULA'S MONUMENT.

THE

CHURCH OF SAINT URSULA

AND HER COMPANIONS

IN COLOGNE.

ITS MEMORIALS, MONUMENTS AND CURIOSITIES

BY

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PASTOR AD SANCTAM URSULAM.

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I. St. Ursula and her companions.

As early as the second century, Christianity was spread over the Southern part of the British island. This part was subject to the Roman Empire; and by that means a connexion between it and Rome, the capital of Christianity was kept up, and thus the Gospel easily found its way from Rome to Britain. The Picts and Scots however, the inhabitants of the northern part of the Island, still remained in infidelity. At the beginning of the 5th century, nearly the whole population of the many small kingdoms into which the Southern part was divided were Christians. About the middle of the same century when the Romans had left Britain, the Christians of the Southern part were sorely oppressed by their infidel neighbours, the Picts and Scots. To resist these enemies they called in to their aid the Anglo-Saxons, a courageous but infidel people who inhabited the countries now called Holstein and Schleswig as far as Jütland. The warlike Anglo-Saxons came in bodies, and landed on the neighbouring British shore in the year 449. Victory crowned their efforts against the Picts and Scots whom they compelled to retire from the South of Britain. But when they had seen the beauty of that country as well as learnt its fertility, they began to covet it for their own. Accorddingly they turned their arms against those

who had called them over, and a terrible fate met the Christians of Southern Britain. Driven from their own homes, some fled to the West, some crossed the sea, whilst slavery became the lot of others. Many of the British Christians fled to the Continent, some to Batavia and some to Gaul expecting to find a safe asylum there amongst the Christians. Of those who went to Batavia many proceeded still further along the Rhine in order to seek refuge in the districts of the Lower Rhine which still enjoyed peace and tranquility unter the Roman government. In this way, they reachad Cologne, the old Roman colony. Amongst these British fugitives, there were many virgins whose fathers and brothers had been slain in the wars with the Anglo-Saxons. One of them of royal blood surpassed the rest in nobility of birth and intelligence as well as in piety and virtue. Her name was Ursula. She was the leader and model of her companions and seems to have been acknowledged and honoured by them as their head. In the Christian city of Cologne where the British fugitives were received with great kindness, the royal virgin was honoured and venerated by all, and she soon became to all the women and maidens there, as she had before been of her companions, their model and example.

But in Cologne they did not enjoy peace and tranquility long; they were doomed to meet here a fate even more dreadful than that from which they had escaped when they fled from their own country. The Huns, a pagan people hated yet feared throughout the West, because of their

cruelty and immorality, were then living near the Caspian Sea. Previous to this time they had left their homes and advanced as far as Hungary, and even to the Southern part of Germany. In the beginning of the year 450 this people together with some other barbarian tribes again moved forward, intending to pass through Southern Germany into Gaul and Italy, and to make their own, by murder and plunder the wealth of these flourishing countries. These barbarians in large bodies under their king and leader Attila invaded the above mentioned districts of the Roman Empire; and whereever they passed, the traces they left behind were ruins and bleeding corpses. Horror and dread spread over the whole of Europe, and in every country through which the Huns were to pass, all the country poeple and the inhabitants of the towns and villages fled for refuge to the forests and mountains, or sought protection behind the walls of the fortified cities. These brutal hordes were not stopped in their onward march by the resistance of a few Roman soldiers. In the summer of 451, the immense army of the Huns had conquered and laid waste Southern Germany and the Soud-Eastern part of Gaul. Having advanced as far as the city of Orleans, they had sacked the towns, taken with them or destroyed the moveable property of the inhabitants, and murdered the men, sparing the women and maidens for slavery and dishonour. Near Orleans however they met with a stout resistance from a large Roman force under Aëtius and the Western-Goths undor Theodorich their king. Moreover these forces were joined by a

large army of the Franks under their king Merovaeus. The approach of these large armies caused the Huns to retire in a north-easterly direction beyond the Seine and Marne as far as a large plain near Chalons sur Marne, where they awaited their enemies. There on the Catalaunian fields, in July of 451 was fought the dreadful battle by which the fate of the whole of Europe was decided. From early morning till night that terrible battle raged in which migthier armies than had ever been seen before, were engaged. The Huns were conquered and when night came on, they left the battle field after having lost 160,000 men slain by the united forces of the Romans. They retired northwards towards Belgium, and on their march took vengeance for the defeat they had undergone, by the most revolting acts of cruelty which they inflicted on the Romans and Franks through whose territories they passed. From Belgium they marched eastward in order to reach the Rhine, and about the middle of October they arrived at Cologne, a fortified city. Besides the citizens themselves many from the surrounding districts had taken refuge behind its walls. The army of the Huns was still large and formidable and after a short siege the city was taken by storm. Here were repeated those scenes of cruelty which were to be witnessed whenever the Huns took a city. Themen who were foundin Cologne being unable to conceal themselves or to fly to the surrounding forests, were massacred. The maidens and younger women were led from the town to some high ground before the northern gate, were probably

the camp was pitched and the king's tent erected. There they were distributed as booty to those inhuman soldiers and given up to most dreadful fate, to slavery and dishonour. Together along with the maidens and women of Cologne, the British virgins were led out and at their head was their royal leader Ursula. St. Ursula sustained the courage and fortitude of her companions in this terrible situation in which a company of about eleven thousend females had no choice but death or the most ignominious dishonour. As in the days of peace she had been the leader and model not only of her British companions, but also of the women and maidens of Cologne, so was she their stay in this hour of extreme affliction and difficulty. By her quiet resignation and corstancy and by her ardent encouragement she inspired the whole company with the resolution of dyng rather than consenting to what they bad been destined. With determination therefore they all resisted the wicked designs of the barbarians in spite of their cruel threats. The Huns enraged by such constancy fell like wild beasts on these christian heroines and murdered them on the field where they were assembled. Very many fell pierced by the arrows of the Huns, many were killed by the sword or by clubs. St. Ursula struck by an arrows fell in the midst of her companions. She had encouraged them to constancy to the last, and had called to their mind the heavenly reward they would receive hereafter. Besides the females many mem ane children who would pro-

bably have been made slaves to the Huns were led outside the city and murdered.

The Huns retiring from Cologne crossed the Rhine. The few citizens who had concealed themselves in the city itself or in the surrounding woods ventured to come out from their hiding places. But what a terrible sight met their eyes! They found not only the streets of the city streaming with blood and strewn with corpses, but also the large field before the northern gate covered with the dead bodies of the murdered womeu. Many we may suppose were not yet dead but severely wounded, and able to give an account of the frightful scene they had witnessed. The bodies of the murdered were buried in the same field in which they had so victoriously fought the great fight for the preservation of their virtue and their faith. We may be sure that these murdered Christians to the remainder appeared as martyrs who with their own blood had borne witness for Christ. offering their lives forthe law of Christ. The royal British virgin St. Ursula known and venerated by all, was buried on the spot where she fell, struck by the deadly arrow, and where now above her tomb stands the church of her name. By her side were buried her British companions, whilst the other martyrs were buried on the place of their martyrdom in the large field which stretched eastward to the banks of the Rhine, southward nearly as far as the Roman trench surrounding the town. We have reason to suppose that this great cemetery did not extend far northward and westward beyond the spot where the

Church of St. Ursula stands. When Cologne was rebuilt and again inhabited, the glory and veneration of the martyrs spread abroad. The day on which they died, struck by the arrows and swords of the barbarians was the 21st October and is celebrated as their anniversary. These martyrs were chosen by the citizens of Cologne as their special Patrons. As the greater part of those martyred were virgins and as the Church which was built on the place of their martyrdom was called «The Church of the Virgins», the whole company of 11000 persons came to be taken as a company of virgins. In the same way must be explained the fact, that the people afterwards maintained that the 11000 martyrs were British virgins, because their leader St. Ursula, and a large and illustrious part of that company came from Britain.

II. The Church of St. Ursula and her companions.

The Church which stands over the tombs of St. Ursula and her companions was formely called »The Church of the Holy Virgins«, »Ecclesia Sanctarum Virginum« which in the Cologne dialect was corrupted into »Sinter Virgen». or »Sinter Villgen« Since the 16th centhury this Church has been called: »The Church of St. Ursula». In former centuries when the Church was still outside the city, being completely exposed to hostile attacks it was on several occasions destroyed in time of war. The foundation

stone of the Church of St. Ursula as it now stands was laid about the year 1020 and the Church is therefore one of the first of the Old Romane style built in the Rhineland. The oldest portions of the present Church which still remain, are the broad high nave, the two side aisles, and the transepts. Formerly the east end of the nave was closed by a halfspherical apsis. In each aisle were two Galeries one above the other, and opening into the naves by arches. The first two stories of the present belfry were built as a vestibule to the nave about the year 1130. The other stories of this belfry were built later, probably in the 14th century. The magnificent gothic chancel was built in the 13th century about the same time as Cologne Cathedral, and consecrated in 1287. Then also the groined roofs of the old nave which was formerly covered by a plain roof, were built. In the 14th century an additional aisle was built on the South side of the Church. Two other buildings were added to this new aisle in the 17th century, the South transept being extended across its east end and at the west end was built the golden chamber. This golden chamber was consecrated Sept. 17th 1644, and its cost defrayed by the Imperial ambassador at the Westphalican congress, John von Crane and his wife Maria Verena Hegemühlerin. In 1680 the roofs of the belfry and nave were burnt by lightning, and in their place was built the present cupola in the Rococco style, and surmounted by a crown.

Since the year 922 a convent of nuns, most of the members of which belonged to the no-

bility of the country, has been connected with the old Church of the Holy Virgins. It was in this convent that St. Alice lived as a nun from 960 till 980. In 980 she left this place to become first Abbess of the new convent of Vilich near Bonn, founded by her father Count Megingoz. About 1048 the pious Queen Richeza, daughter of the Count Palatine Ezzo, vhen expelled from Poland, sought an asylum in the convent of the Holy Virgins, and took the veil from the hands of Bruno Bishop of Toul and afterwards Pope Leo IX. About the end of the 12th century this convent was transformed into a secular convent for noble ladies, and all who were not of that rank, went to the sister convent of Maximine founded in 1188. The members of the convent of St Ursula were all of noble extraction and none lower than daughters of Counts were admitted. At the beginning of the 19th century this convent and property were confiscated and annexed to the State lands, and the Church of St. Ursula made the Parish Church of Maria Ablass, the former Parish Church of which had been taken down on account of its decayed state.

III. Monuments and works of art in the Church of St. Ursula.

1. *The Clematian title of the Church.* A Roman inscription on a stone on the inside of a south wall of the chancel. It runs, thus:
   Divinis flammeis visionibus frequenter ad-

monitus et virtutis magnae majestatis martyrii caelestium virginum imminentium ex partibus orientis exhibitus pro voto Clematius V(ir) C(larisssimus) de proprio in loco suo hanc basilicam voto quod debebat a fundamentis restituit, Si quis autem super tantam majestatem hujus basilicae ubi sanctae virgines pro nomine Christi sanguinem suum fuderunt corpus alicujus deposuerit exceptis virginibus sciat se sempiternis tartari ignibus puniendum. »Often admonished by divine visions and by the consideration of the majesty of the martyrdom of the Holy Virgins who appeared to him, Clematius anobleman of the East according to vow thoroughly restored this Basilica on his own estate and at his own expense. But if any one notwithstanding the majesty of the place where the holy virgins shed their blood for the name of Christ, should dare to bury any person here, let him know that he shall be punished by the eternal fire of hell.«

2. *The coffin of Viventia,* a small very old sarcophagus, standing on four short supports near the entrance to the vestry. According to a very ancient tradition this Viventia was the daughter of Pipin of Heristal, Duke of Heristal, Duke of Brabant and major-domo of the kings of the Franks. She is said to have died here in Cologne in the year 644, at the very early age of six. As her father desired that she should be buried in the

Church of the Holy Virgins. and as she coult not be interred in the ground made sacred by the blood of matyrs, the corpse was placed in a stone coffin and kept in the Church above ground.

3. Over the sepulchre of Viventia is a stone representation of the baring of the cross, the sculptor of which is unknown, but the style points to the 16th century as its date.
4. The tomb of St. Ursula in the north Transept. Black marble encloses the stone coffin in which the body of the Saint reposed until the 7th century when the holy Bishop Cunibert found it and raised it above ground. A full sized figure, in alabaster, of St. Ursula lies on the coffin lid. It represents a noble yet chaste figure and its sight laeves a deep impression on the visitor. At the feet is the name of the sculptor J. F. W. Lentz. The Imperial Ambassador mentioned above John von Crane raised this sepulchre at his own expense in 1659.
5. Ten old pictures of the apostles painted on slate which are fastened to the wall in the South aisle near the principal entrance to the Church. The pictures of St. Peter and Paul are wanting. According to an inscription on the back of the picture of the Apostle St. Philippus these paintings are of the year 1224. Historically these pictures are of great value, as they are probably the oldest German specimens. The figures of the Apostles are in the Byzantine style of painting.

6. Sixteen old German paintings, artistically, executed, which in thirty parts represent in single scenes the story of St. Ursula and her companions as it was formerly told and poetically embellished. On the last two pictures the names of the two painters Gürgen van Scheiven and Jan van Scheiven are written, accompanied by the figures 1456, the year in which the paintings were done.
7. The great painting on the high altar representing the martyrdom of St Ursula, was produced about 1640 by tse Cologne painter Cornelius Schütte a pupil of Rubens.
8. The painting on the altar in the apsis of the nord aisle. It represents the Bishop St. Nicolas receiviug from the Emperor Constantine the decree conceding the free practice of religion to the Cristians throughout the Roman Empire. This picture was painted about the year 1650 by John Hülsmann. Its position prevents it from receiving a good light. The other paintings are of little value as works of art.

IV: The relics kept in the Church of St. Ursula.

According to documents they began in the 7th century to take up the bones of the martyrs belonging to the company of St. Ursula, in order

to expose them for plubic veneration. In the same century, as tradition tells us the sepulchre of St. Ursula was found and her body disinterred by the Bishop St. Cunibert. A document of the 8th century tells us that already at that time many churches in Batavia, the present Holland, possessed relics of the Virgins of the company of St Ursula. These disinterments were first made in the interior of the Church, afterwards outside, when the buildings of the Convent, founded here, were enlarged or other buildings erected near the Church. In this way not only the Church of the Holy Virgins itself was enriched with the relics of these Saints, but such relics were given also to other Churches of Cologne and to other distant Churches. In the year 1155 they began to dig up the whole field, where the Virgins were martyred. About that time the city was enlarged as far as the place of the martyrdom of the Virgins. The bones of these martyrs, which had often been dishonoured formerly, when houses were built there, were now desinterred and brought to various churches. This general disinterment was ordered and directed by the Benedictins of the Abbey of Deutz (opposite Cologne.) It lasted 9 years, and many thousands of bodies of martyrs were disinterred and given away to various churches in Germany, France and the Netherlands.

Most of the numerous relics now to be seen in the Church of St. Ursula were dug out of the ground of the Church itself and of the surrounding parts, where the Convent was standing. Only a small part comes from the general dis-

interment of the year 1155. Some of these relics are enclosed in numerous stonecoffins, put up on the South and West Side of the Church, some are enclosed in the walls of the Chancel, some again are enclosed in the walls of de Church and of the golden Chamber for public veneration. The heads of these martyrs are separated from the other bones, each enveloped in a velvet-capsule embroidered with gold and placed in single cases partly in the Sanctuary, partly in the nave and the aisles and partly in the golden Chamber. The number of these heads amounts to seventeen hundred. The table of the altar of most blessed virgin in the South Transept of the Church contains relics which belonged to the Church of the SS. Machabees. This Church stood on the same field, where the Virgins were martyred, and was filled with relics of the martyrs, the companions of St. Ursula. It was pulled down in the beginning of this century. The relics belonging to this Church were distributed among the several churches of the city of Cologne.

V. The golden Chamber attached to the Church of St. Ursula.

The »golden Chamber« is a large and beautiful chapel attached to the south-western corner of the Church of St. Ursula. It is called so from its being plentifuly gilt in the interior part of it. In this golden Chamber the most important

relics of this Church are kept, and not only relics of St. Ursula and her company but also other portions of very remarkable relics, which were brought hither during the course of many centuries. Many of the cases and capsules in which these relics are enclosed, are distinguished for their antiquity and their artistic value. Therefore the golden Chamber is important and venerable not only for the pious Catholic who sees here the relics of so many Saints whom he reveres, but it is also most interesting to amateurs and antiquarians.

The most remarkable things of the golden Chamber, worth seeing, are as follows:

1. The shrine of St. Ursula. It contains a part of the bones of St. Ursula and the remains of the garment, clothed in which she was interred after her martyrdom. This shrine was erected in the 12th century. Originally it was most precious and plentifully adorned with work of beaten silver and enamels and gems, but it was robbed of its precious ornaments in the French invasion when the Convent to which the Church then belonged, was suppressed. In the year 1881 it was restored to its original beauty, by the munificence of a Cologne-family.
2. The shrine of St. Aetherius and St. Valerius. It contains the bones of the Saints just mentioned and of other martyrs of the company of St. Ursula. The bones of St. Aetherius were found in the year 1155 near St. Ursula's Church, those of Valerius in

the year 1320 within the Church itself. This shrine also was erected in the 12th century. It lost its original ornaments at the same time and in the same manner as the shrine of St. Ursula.

3. The shrine of St Hippolytus. It contains a part of the bones of the martyr St. Hippolytus who, formerly gaoler of St. Laurentius, was converted by him to christianity, but soon afterwards, in the year 258 suffered martyrdom at Rome. It was about the year 870 that these relics were brought from Rome to the newly founded convent of Gerresheim, near Düsseldorf. From Gerresheim they were brought over to Cologne in the year 922 when that convent was destroyed by the Hungarians. The nuns of that convent however and the relics of their church were removed by Herimann I. the archbishop of Cologne, to the convent attached to the Church of the Virgin Saints. This magnificent shrine, a new one, was made in the year 1871 by the sculptors Messrs. Bong of Cologne.
4. Many skulls of virgins and martyrs, belonging to the company of St. Ursula. They are partly enclosed in busts, partly open placed in two big cases at the westside of the golden Chamber, partly enclosed in other cases. There are 120 of the busts just mentioned, each of which encloses a skull. They come from different centuries, from the fourteenth up to the eighteenth. Those of the seventeenth and eighteenth are adorned

with precious silver ornaments. On many of the skulls mentioned traces of the martyrdom suffered are clearly to be perceived. They are dinted by sword-strokes, pierced by arrows or show traces of being struck by clubs. The following skulls which are upon the altar are especially remarkable.

a) The head of St. Christina stained all over with blood
b) The head of St. Aetherius, plentifully adorned with pearls.
c) The head of St Pantalus dinted by a stroke with the sword.
d) The head of St. Artimia, a very youthful virgin, on whose skull traces of club-blows are still to be perceived.
e) The head of St. Cordula from which we are able to conclude that she was of mature age.
f) The head of St. Benedicta, split by several dreadful strokes of the sword.

In addition to these heads there are placed upon the altar:

5) The arm-bone of St. Ursula, encased in a wooden arm silvered over. This relic was formerly enclosed in an arm of beaten silver o work of art and plentifully adorned with gems. This precious reliquary dissapeared from the church when the convent was suppressed.
6. The jaw-bone of St. Aetherius enclosed in an old reliquary copper beaten and gilt, of roman style, remarkable for its form and engravings.

7. A large cylinder of christal, the foot and cover being of gilt metal. It contains earth mixed up with blood, which was taken from the sepulchres of the Virgin Saints and Martyrs. In several tombs when they were opened in the year 1155 this earth was found.

The following relics are placed in a glasscase on the west-side of the golden Chamber.

8. The foot of St. Ursula, placed in a beautiful casket of ivory, artistically carved and comming from the 14th century. This casket is highly valued by amateurs and antiquarians. Its engravings represent profane subjects from which we gather that it formerly served as a jewel casket.
9. Relics of the martyr St. Stephanus and of other Saints, placed in an ivory casket, smaller than the above mentioned, but very similar to it and adorned with the same engravings.
10. The hair-net of St. Ursula which according to tradition was found in her sepulchre near her head. It is kept in an uncarved ivory-casket.
11. The iron point of the arrow by which St. Ursula was killed. It is encased in silver and was according to tradition found in her tomb near her bones
12. A joint of a finger of St. Maternus, the first bishop of Cologne. Is is encased in a silver finger.
13 A particle of the Holy Cross, enclosed in a silver ostensorium of modern style.

14. A cylinder of christal placed in a gothic pointed-arch of silver gilt, plentifully adorned. It contains a particle of the whip with which Christ was scourged, and a piece of the chasuble of St. Servatius
15. A long cylinder of christal encased in silver gilt and standing on four curved feet. From the top of the cylinder springs forth a figure of Christ on the cross by the side of whom our Blessed Lady and St. John are standing. It is of ancient form The cylinder contains pieces of the garment and the linen in which the body of St. Ursula was wrapped up in the sepulchre.
16. A small cylinder of christal embordered in silver gilt, adorned by a large sapphire and contains some particles of the crown of thorns of Christ
17. A rock-cristal carved in the form of a small elephant which bears upon its back a little tower containing some small relics. It is very old and remarkable.
18. A large square polished rock-cristal encased in silver gilt. It represents a little tomb standing on four feet, which contains hair clotted with blood of a virgin belonging to the companions of St. Ursula.
19. A round ivory box, very old and containing some relics
20. Four very old caskets of different shape size and adornment, all of them containing relics.

On the west-side of the golden Chamber moreover are to be seen in two frames fastened to the wall: